

April 23, 2014

Attention All Nebraska Adult Education Staff: We Need Your Help NOW!

By: Vicki Bauer, Nebraska Adult Education Director

It's hard to believe that the current program year will be ending within the next two months....and for some of you, if your classes end in May, you will have just a little over a month left. This is a crucial time of the year for the Adult Education program.

Let me explain: Each state sets performance standards each year with the US Department of Education, with continuous program improvement being one of the major factors involved. Each year, we must strive, as a state and as individuals working in the program, no matter what your position is --- to assist more individuals to improve basic academic skills and complete their goals. We measure the basic skills improvement ONLY with either the BEST Plus (for ESL) or the TABE (for ABE/ASE). Academic gain is shown by movement into the next higher Educational Functioning Level (EFLs). We measure goal completion (get a job, retain a job, finish high school, or enter post-secondary education) for individuals in the program by data matching with the Nebraska Department of Labor, the National Student Clearinghouse, and GED® Testing Service. Proving that we are indeed serving the adults who enter our program is essential to our program's success.

The time to conduct post-testing is determined by the test developer. Following are the minimum number of classroom hours needed for post-testing:

- ▶ For ESL students, post-testing is done after 60 hours
- ▶ For ABE students, NRS levels 1-4, post-testing is done after 40 hours
- ▶ For ASE (or GED® prep), NRS level 5 (low adult secondary level), post-testing is done after 30 hours.

The Nebraska Assessment Policy states that each teacher/class is to post-test at least 90% of the eligible students in class – are you accomplishing this in your class(es)? If you are not sure, check with your program director to see if you are reaching that 90%, and also to see if your post-testing is up-to-date.

There are several reports in AIMS that can tell you who needs to be post-tested or re-post-tested. AIMS indicates that there are presently 324 students in the state who qualify for post-testing, but either it hasn't been done or the scores are yet to be entered into AIMS. AIMS can tell each program director the names and classes of those persons who haven't been post-tested.

What is disheartening is that there have been 322 students enrolled this program year AND who qualified for post-testing, but separated before the post-testing was done – this is far too many people and this has a negative effect on our performance measures. *NOW and in the future, checking the post-test status of all your students must be a priority for every Adult Educator in Nebraska.*

Each year your program director signs a compliance page for us, and ultimately for the US Department of Education, the provider of a majority of your program's funding. By signing the compliance page, your program director is saying that the following required items (not optional) are being done:

- ▶ If a person has attended class for 1 or more times, that student must be entered into AIMS even if they have less than 12 hours of attendance.
- ▶ All students are given a pre-test (either BEST Plus or TABE) upon entry into the program, or within the first 12 hours of attendance.
- ▶ 90% of eligible students are post-tested (as a state, we are around 50%). What percentage of *your* eligible students has been post-tested?

- ▶ If an EFL gain is not made after the required number of hours for post-testing, re-post-testing is required after the minimum number of contact hours. (Just because you post-tested a student once doesn't mean you don't need/want to post-test them again.) Students should be re-post-tested even if they moved up an EFL the first time they were post-tested. When they have again reached the hours required for post-testing, they should be re-post-tested.
- ▶ **Be sure that post-testing is not done until the required minimum number of contact hours is met. (So far this program year, 243 individuals have been post-tested prior to the minimum number of hours. This practice cannot continue.)**
- ▶ Teachers must turn in their monthly attendance forms, the submission date to be determined by the local program director. A number of programs are now having teachers submit their attendance forms, registration forms, and student test results every two weeks so that the AIMS data is more up-to-date. And, are you checking your class sign-in form to ensure that the time the each student is in class is correct?
- ▶ All testing scores must be submitted and entered into AIMS – even if the test score did not improve. Starting July 21, 2014, all teachers who lead a class are required to be registered in AIMS and to check their class data; contact your local program director for instructions if you are not currently registered.

Do your part to help Nebraska Adult Education improve its performance. Let's move upward and onward and the time is NOW. Last year, we scored 93% on our performance measures – let's all work toward 100% and beyond and prove that we have continuous program improvement each year. And, most importantly, our students are leaving Adult Education better prepared for work and/or postsecondary education, and heading to a better life!

Nebraska Delegation Attends COABE

By: Jim Lukesh, Nebraska AE Coordinator

Fourteen educators from Nebraska AE programs made up the Nebraska delegation to the Commission on Adult Basic Education (COABE) Conference in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on March 16-20. The conference began with pre-sessions on Sunday, March 16 and each delegate was able to attend ten concurrent sessions during the next three days. Onsite and offsite events added to the networking.

Members of the delegation will be providing reports for the AE Newsletter on some of the sessions which they found intriguing. Look for those articles in this and future newsletters. Consensus of the group is that the conference was one of the best in recent memory; so be sure to read the articles and access other presentations from Pittsburgh and the previous two COABE conferences at the COABE Repository found at <http://www.coabe.org/html/resourcerepository.html>

COABE 2015 will be in Denver, Colorado on April 22-25. We anticipate sending another fine delegation to COABE. Attend the Fall Adult Education Conference in Kearney October 2-3, 2014 to be entered into a drawing for the trip to Denver.

Implementing Webb's DOK in the Active Learning Classroom (COABE 2014)

By: Marilyn Dodge, Western Nebraska Community College

COABE in Pittsburgh this year had many great sessions; it was hard to choose. Sara Gutting's session had great ideas on how to implement Webb's Depth of Knowledge in the classroom. Sara explained the four levels of DOK:

1. Recall
2. Skills/concepts
3. Strategic (short term) thinking
4. Extended thinking-this level won't be used over time

Webb's DOK uses verbs while Bloom's Taxonomy uses nouns. Sara also stated Webb's DOK and Bloom's Taxonomy are parallel structures. Webb's brings Bloom's to a more active, cognitive level and challenges the brain. High School Equivalency has 20% Level 1 questions and 80% of Levels 2 and 3 questions. Sara had attendees use prompt cards to ask levels 1-3 questions and gave out samples of the Common Core Achieve Instructor Resource Guides, one for grades 6-8 and one for grades 9-12. She also had links to various

resources for use in the classroom such as www.edupress.com and googling question stems for each level in each subject. She also had great things to say about “the Story of Us,” a series on American History on The History Channel. All in all, it was a great session.

Note: See the *Assessment Guide for Educators* available on the GED® Testing Service website (www.gedtestinservice.com). It gives complete information on Dr. Norman L. Webb’s Depth of Knowledge (DOK) model. GEDTS used Webb’s DOK model to guide item development for the 2014 GED® tests.

Overcoming Obstacles (COABE 2014)

By: Rosi Decker, Southeast Community College

Pittsburgh welcomed us with open arms. All the people we met from there were very friendly and helpful. The group from Southeast Community College in Lincoln had the privilege of staying at the Omni William Penn Hotel. It is the oldest hotel in Pittsburgh. It was established in 1916. We were given a private tour of the hotel by a very knowledgeable bellboy. The hotel was about 4 blocks from the convention center so we walked back and forth through construction to attend sessions. It was cold and there was rain on the last day we attended. The Center was well organized and they served very good food and we got through the lines in a timely manner. The vendors were very friendly and willing to inform us of their wares. The rooms were comfortable.

The speakers were great. Byron Pitts, a correspondent for ABC News, told us of his struggles growing up. He was illiterate until he was 12 years old. He stuttered; so he was put in classes and just passed over to get any help. He worked hard and graduated from high school and went on to college to get a degree in journalism and speech communication.

Another interesting session was presented by Mawi Asgedom, an author of books used in the classrooms across North America. When he was a child, he fled Ethiopia with his family to Sudan and he spent 3 years in refugee camps in Sudan and finally made it to the United States. He overcame poverty and language barriers to finally graduate from Harvard University. He has also trained leaders at the Harvard School of Education.

Another presenter, Archie Willard, was diagnosed as dyslexic when he was 54 years old. His wife was determined that he get help with his dyslexia and then go to school to learn to read. After a couple attempts to start classes, he finally went into the classroom. The instructor worked with him and wouldn’t let him give up. You have to take the first step to succeed.

Rob Shindler has a son with a learning disability. Rob was in denial at the beginning, but finally realized that his son needed him in his corner. Now Rob volunteers at the Cook County Jail teaching the inmates to read. He and his daughter started a program introducing high school students to teaching adults to read. All the sessions were very informative. Everyone seemed to have a good time and learned a lot.

BEST Plus Websites & E-mail

By: Jim Lukesh, Nebraska AE Coordinator

Carol Leonhardt, one of the Nebraska BEST Plus trainers, provided the following links. The material is useful for any of the directors of test administrators of programs where BEST Plus is used to ascertain the language level of incoming students. Questions on BEST Plus can be submitted and one of the BEST Plus trainers will respond with an answer to your query. **E-mail your questions to the Nebraska BEST Plus trainers. They are there to assist you with any Best Plus questions you might have: NebraskaBP@gmail.com**

Instructions on how to activate tests online <http://www.cal.org/aea/assets/onlineactivation.pdf>

On-line purchase code activation <http://www.cal.org/bestplus/BPOnlineActivation/index.aspx>

Enhanced BEST Plus Score Management Software User Guide Addendum (See handout in back pocket of your Test Administrator’s Guide) <http://www.cal.org/aea/pdfs/BEST-Plus-SMS-Addendum.pdf>

Download Enhanced Score Management <http://www.cal.org/aea/bestplus/sms.html>

CAL Technical FAQ <http://www.cal.org/aea/current/technicalsupport.html>

Developing Oral Proficiency of Adults Learning English (Excellent professional development module for test administrators and ESL instructors) <http://www.cal.org/adultspeak/index.html>

Assessment Policies, Nebraska AE <http://www.education.ne.gov/ADED/>

Three Easy Tactics Made Easy (COABE 2014)

By: [Jim Lukesh, Nebraska AE Coordinator](#)

On the whole I was quite happy with the sessions at COABE this year. Usually there were two or three that I would have liked to attend at the same time, but, fortunately, the presentations do repeat. Of the sessions I attended, the one that I have chosen to highlight was entitled “3 Easy Tactics Made Easy” presented by Christopher Roman, a Global Career Development Facilitator and Peer Mentor Coach for the State of Pennsylvania. The presentation was in the ABE Transition/Career Pathways strand.

The description was: “Participant will learn three easy tactics, based on the Socratic Method, which can be used to help students improve understanding of any topic. You will learn to introduce, move deeper, and review any topic using these powerful activities.” I thought the description indicated the speaker would come from a bit of a different direction than most of the presentations and I am a bit of a world history junkie so the reference to the Socratic Method brought me in. The presentation was based on the book *3 Easy Tactics to Use in Your Classroom* by Dr. Win Wenger.

Wenger focuses on the Socratic Method which first appeared in Ancient Greece. The Socratic Method, in use for over 2,000 years, was used by the Sophists, or teachers, who were actually questioning people in an effort to improve their own perceptions but started, in turn, to develop the listener's perceptions also. The theory was that all the information anyone needed to know was already inside them but just needed the right questions to draw it out.

The classical Socratic Method centered on very specific questions which led to expanding answers and deduction, or going from the big picture to get to the specifics. The modern day version of the Socratic Method would be the Maieutic Method which is inductive, or going from specifics to generalize the big picture. Roman also pointed out another form of learning, didactic, or the science of teaching, which was very important in the Dark Ages when few people were literate and education came from someone reading a book or from the paintings and windows in the churches and was thus very structured. The Wenger method is based on three principles: The Law of Effect – You get more of what you reinforce; Principle of Description – When you detail aloud to a meaningful listener you discover more and more about and discover relations to everything else (remember contextualized instruction); and Principle of Growth and Development – Learning, physical growth and development of the brain proceeds best as feedback on one's own activities.

The 3 Easy Tactics of Wenger are: The Planned Question; The Instant Replay; and The Highlighter Question. [The Planned Question](#) is built around a key issue or point and is used as the climax of the lesson to make all the contents memorable and to develop the thinking, reasoning and language skills of the student. [The Highlighter Questions](#) are used to underscore any point that the teacher wants to make and, as before, help to develop the thinking, reasoning and language skills. [The Instant Replay](#) is just what is implied, a review of the material covered to reinforce and check for retention. This can be at the beginning of the lesson covering materials gone over previously, or at the traditional end of the lesson.

The instant replay is not only useful in the classroom setting but also in meetings and planning sessions. A good question would be “what did you hear during this meeting?” There may be as many versions as there are attendees in which case some highlighting is necessary. The method Roman used to cover the three questions is the “Buzz Session.” During the buzz session, the students group in pairs or sets of three and one student is allowed to speak uninterrupted for two minutes about what they think or heard about the question.

The speaker will say much more than if they had to just answer a simple question and this will bring out ideas they probably were unaware they even had. After this, insightful questions can bring out more material. The listeners find out that what they thought they heard might not have been the only context of the lesson and often get ideas from the speaker, which was the original goal of the sophists.

They also find out how difficult it can be to listen for two minutes without agreeing, disagreeing, nodding, rolling the eyes, or checking for e-mails. For students who are extremely reluctant to speak, it is possible to begin by writing instead of speaking. During the buzz sessions, there are no right or wrong answers. (Seriously, unless you criticize one of my favorite sports teams or boxer dogs.) Roman stated that the synergy between speaker and listener can be compared to an algebraic equation – both

sides have to be equal and one cannot be changed without changing the other. Another benefit, especially for the teacher, is to realize that every student might have been there for the same lesson but they did not hear or learn the same lesson. As a teacher, it is good to know what the students actually did get out of the lesson.

Roman also indicated that the Buzz Sessions are a good chance for the teacher to catch a breath or regroup. I did not realize that all the times I was putting students into small groups for discussions that I was employing the Socratic Method. At the time I thought I was just retaining my sanity. As I stated, the sessions at COABE were good, at least all of the ones that I attended. I will highlight a few others in coming issues but this was the one that struck me as different and extremely well thought out; so I decided to lead with it.

If you are interested in seeing more material on this topic you can access the PowerPoint and pdfs for this presentation and others at the COABE repository at www.coabe.org/html/resourcepository.html For this presentation click on **3 Easy Tactics Made Easy** from the menu of topics on the left side of the page. Presentations of the last three COABE conferences are available from the Repository.

Sharing is Caring (COABE 2014)

By: David Gifford, Bellevue Public Schools

What do you want to do when you finish a good book or watch an exciting movie with a crazy twist at the end? You may go back and re-read or watch the ending again, but after that. You probably want to share the experience with someone else. Entertainment is just one area in which people enjoy input from others. The education field is another area that benefits from individuals sharing experiences and resources. How can teachers and students enhance the sharing experience? One solution is better use of technology. Google provides products that are free, easy to use, and accessible to anyone with a computer.

Google has created a cloud-based service that allows teachers to collaborate. Employees in the Bellevue Public Schools are assigned an email account through Gmail. This email account is a Google product. With this email, the user is also allotted 10 gigabytes of cloud space to create and share documents. This space is called Google Drive. It allows the user to create documents comparable to Microsoft Word, Excel, and Power Point. The best part is these are free to use and share. The information is stored in Google's cloud and can be accessed from any computer. A finished document or a working document can be shared with a co-worker with a Gmail address.

Instructors can share information very quickly and as often as they choose. Information that is useful can be stored, updated, and retrieved in a matter of minutes. In one department, instructors are using Google Spreadsheets to document lesson plans and keep a file of helpful websites. Meeting agendas can be shared and modified before, during, and after meetings. Templates for worksheets and assignments are easily created and printed. The possibilities for enhancing communication in the workplace are endless.

Administrators and instructors are not the only ones who could benefit from Google's collaborative tools. Students could reap the benefits that come with using technology and the ability to share their work at any time or any place. All GED® students today need an email account, why not make it Gmail? Teachers can increase the personal connection with students by allowing assignments to be created in Google Drive and using the sharing option to turn in the assignments. Teachers can then add comments and share useful information and tools in return. This sharing is not limited to the classroom. Students can write essays, create timelines, and share math problems during a weekend of studying or a late night cram session. Instructors can reply and add comments during their regular hours. This ability to share work can open learning up to times that are available for the student.

Believe it or not, teachers are not the only ones with useful hints and strategies. Students can provide each other with learning tools and positive feedback. It is amazing to watch students interact in the classroom using Google Documents and Google Chat. The students enjoy working with each other to complete projects and make personal connections. Students can use each other as resources and as pillars of strength. Google allows students to be accessible when they need each other, both in the classroom and outside of the classroom. The ability to share a creation, an idea, or an accomplishment is the driving force behind

continuous learning. Google has enhanced our ability to share and learn. We should use the tools available to heighten communication between staff members and students. Our students will benefit from the daily use of technology and the skills that come from working together and sharing in success.

Integrating Technology Into the Adult Education Classroom (COABE 2014)

By: Emily Duncan, Northeast Community College

One of the sessions that I attended during the COABE Conference was “Integrating Technology into the Adult Education Classroom.” The presenter showed us various websites and apps that she has used. One site that was reappearing in many sessions was polleverywhere.com. Students can use their phones, iPads, or computers to answer questions and instructors get instant feedback. One site that I found interesting was voicethread.com. This site allows you to create a presentation and narrate it. I see myself using this site to create teacher training videos for timesheets and entering attendance. She concluded the session with having us complete a math tower exercise. We were presented with a math tower that has four problems for students to work out. She left enough space for students to work out the problem. When the student is finished, they will scan a QR code with a mobile device that has a QR reader and it will show the right answer. She also uses QR codes to direct students to a website with extra resources. Overall, I really enjoyed attending COABE and brought back many new resources and ideas to use.

Breaking Avoidance Patterns (COABE 2014)

Submitted by Jan Sears, Crete Public Schools

Dr. Richard Cooper approached learning styles in a way I hadn’t seen before. He discussed avoidance patterns adults can use and the fact that they often do not know how they learn best. All of this limits their success. He said he can ask a student two questions and know if they need specific help.

Question 1: Do you confuse left and right? If so, you probably are confusing similar things on multiple choice tests and there are ways to sort out the best answer. Left/right discrimination problems can cause a whole array of issues related to learning.

Question 2: Do you leave drawers and doors open? If so, your mind is racing and anticipating future actions. (“There is no use closing this drawer since I will need to open it again in a few minutes.”) We need to bring them back to the present task and help them learn to self-check their work and not skip over steps or directions. He discussed “blurred hearing” and said that those students make terrible writers and spellers.

At least 20% of the population learns differently. When they don’t fit the mold, they often fail to complete assignments since they would rather be seen as lazy than stupid. They may not get up and go to school, get angry (others will avoid an angry person). Crying, depression and anxiety can all be issues with this 20%. Other red flags are being unprepared and not studying correctly (“I stayed up all night to study”). Hypnosis and memory techniques can work well for test anxiety.

One way to help is to visit with students about how this behavior works against them. Then jump to the future and show how it could work differently—then bring them back to the present and suggest what they could do now. Dr. Cooper suggested learningdifferences.com and gingersoftware.com as resources. When I checked them after arriving home, I find that both are excellent. Ginger Software can be an excellent tool for students to use in writing—one section helps them rephrase sentences, one edits their work. It would work for upper level ESL students as well. Dr. Cooper told me after the session that he had presented at our Fall Conference many years ago. I would suggest that it might be time for him to come again.

Janet Kletke Goes the Extra Mile

By: Jim Lukesh, Nebraska AE Coordinator



Janet Kletke, of Metro Community College and a member of the Adult Ed Fall Conference Planning Committee and one of the Nebraska TEAL trainers, recently was honored with the "Going the Extra Mile Award." Janet has been involved in adult education for over 30 years and the YouTube video which appeared on news shows when she won the award embodies her dedication as a teacher (<http://youtu.be/nQDmZdlcALg>). Janet is an example of the many wonderful teachers dedicating themselves to Adult Education in Nebraska. Congratulations Janet!

The verbiage by one of her GED® students in the nomination letter: "I didn't really have a special teacher in school. The fact is, I never really spent a lot of time in the classroom when I was young. If I had to pick any one person to be a special teacher, I would have to pick my current GED® teacher. Her name is Janet, and she's a very dedicated teacher; she goes the extra mile for me in class and as a private tutor. She's very professional and caring. She has a good sense of humor yet keeps people focused. I would select Janet for all positive reasons. I look forward to getting my GED® knowing how I gave up the chance to graduate years ago. I believe if anyone can help me achieve this goal it would be Janet. Time will tell, but I feel confident I will succeed with her help since she is going the extra mile with me.

Spotlight on...

Nebraska AE Programs and GED®



Stacy Tarr, Central Community College-Hastings GED® Graduate

I was a senior and my parents both went to jail for drugs. I couldn't finish school because I had to get a job and start paying bills. It took me awhile to figure out that I had to have my GED® or high school diploma. The GED® diploma has mostly helped just by making me feel better about myself. I like being able to put on applications that I have my diploma. I have had better jobs after receiving it. I went from working at a gas station overnight to working as a med aide. I think people feel better when they are being supported in a tough time. I know for me

I hated when people knew I didn't graduate. My advice would be to stop putting off getting it done and just do it. If I can earn the diploma as a full time mom, wife, and working full time, anyone can do it. I won't say it is easy. But I will say it is totally worth it!!!!!!

Low Level English Language Learners (COABE 2014)

By: Anne Cannon, CCC-Hastings

I had the pleasure of attending for the first time the annual COABE Conference. It was held this year in Pittsburgh on March 17–19. My first impression was of Pittsburgh itself. For some reason, I had an image of Pittsburgh as not exactly a destination city. I couldn't have been more wrong. The geography of the area was lush and full of rolling hills. Downtown Pittsburgh is situated on the land in which the Ohio River splits into the Allegheny River and Monongahela Rivers - absolutely beautiful – even on a cold March day.

The downtown buildings were mixed with old and new and blended wonderfully. Even taking a short break and walking around provided much entertainment. I have to say, I would actually love to go back to Pittsburgh on vacation! My second impression of the trip was the well-organized conference. The sessions were well timed, the speakers were very interesting, and the food was great. That's right – food at a conference was great. I also very much enjoyed spending time and discussing adult education with my peers.

Of all the sessions I attended, the session that made the biggest impression on me was the "Low Level English Language Learners" session. The presenters discussed the importance of instruction that is student-centered, systematic and explicit and based on routine. We need to get to the basics of what low level English learners need to know; where do they encounter English on a daily basis? Am I teaching what is relevant to the student

for these encounters? One specific lesson that I will institute is what the presenters called “Excuse Me” situations. How many of you instruct your students to say, “Excuse me,” when they move through a crowded space, bump into someone, enter a classroom late, sneeze, cough, yawn, etc.? This seems too simple, but do we really focus on this very basic interaction? If not, we should. I know we will be from now on.

Adult Education Directors’ Meeting Held in Lincoln

By: Jim Lukesh, Nebraska AE Coordinator

The semi-annual meeting of the Directors of the Nebraska Adult Education Programs was held in Lincoln at Southeast Community College’s Continuing Education Center on April 9. Thank you to Diane Vesely-Robb and the SCC staff for all the work involved in hosting a meeting. Among the many items discussed during a full day’s meeting were the Nebraska performance measures, new facets of the AIMS reporting service, program evaluations, the new GED® tests, BEST Plus and the continuing grant proposals that will be due in May.

The directors broke into groups to discuss proposals to improve the Nebraska scores on their yearly performance measures. A frank discussion was held and consensus reached on ways to move forward and “make the grade.” A highlight of the annual spring meeting is the presentation of awards to programs that score over 100% on their performance measures for FY 2013. The accompanying photo shows the directors with awards for their programs.



Front row L-R: Ann Chambers, Central Community College; Jim Miller, Alliance Public Schools; and Emily Duncan, Northeast Community College. Back row L-R: Mark Wentz, NE Dept. of Corrections; Jan Sears, Crete Public Schools; Maureen McNamara, Bellevue Public Schools; Diane Vesely-Robb, Southeast Community College-Lincoln and Southeast Community College-Beatrice; and Nancy Schultz, Northeast Community College. Not pictured: Tallie VanWesten, Plattsmouth Community Schools and Robin Rankin, Mid-Plains Community College.

Most of the group remained the next day for the final face-to-face meeting of the Leadership Excellence Academy (LEA) group which is the culmination of a two-year staff development project sponsored by the Nebraska Department of Education Adult Education program.

Technology In The Classroom (COABE 2014)

By: Tallie Van Westen, Plattsmouth Schools

My trip to COABE this year was a great experience. I attended many sessions that were informative and helpful. My focus and the focus of the conference this year was on technology. Most of the sessions I attended were technology based. I came away from the conference with a new batch of websites that will hopefully help my teachers and students become more technologically literate. The session put on by GEDTS was probably one of the most informative for me with the advent of the new test. The session did cause a lot of discussion and the presenters were not able to finish their presentation because of that. I also enjoyed the LINC'S session that I attended. I was able to get a lot of new websites from this session and have only just begun to start checking out what these sites have to offer our program.

Visit the COABE Repository to see the PowerPoints and pertinent information from the session in Pittsburgh. The Repository is at <http://www.coabe.org/html/resourcerepository.html#lincsanoverview> The LINC'S presentation is found under Literacy but there are four other presentations that highlight technology: "Free Technology Tools for the Distance Teacher," "Integrating Technology Within Writing Instruction," "Learning Objects: Coming to a Classroom Near You!," and "Technology Tools for the Classroom."

The presentations from 2012 and 2013 are also available. An excellent presentation is in the 2013 menu and is titled, "Emerging Technologies in the Adult Education Classroom."

The Future of Adult Education in America (COABE 2014)

By: Mark Wentz, Nebraska Department of Correctional Services, Adult Education Principal



While I was at COABE, in the beautiful city of Pittsburgh, and I mean that sincerely, I had the opportunity to sit in on several sessions that were excellent. These ranged from the GED2014 in Corrections, to several on administration, which is one of the most enjoyable parts of my job. However, I was most excited to go to the session entitled, "The Future of Adult Education in America." As a fan of the Syfy channel, I could only begin to imagine what the future holds for us in the Adult Education field. Here are three things I came away with from this session. A brief explanation for each follows:

1. **This change in the GED® testing is one of the biggest changes EVER in Adult Education.**
2. **Multiple sources claim to be experts in this field.**
3. **Each and every person is doomed.**

This change in the GED® testing is one of the biggest changes EVER in Adult Education. Since I became an AE educator in 2008, I heard whispers about a new test on the horizon. As 2014 rolled ever nearer, the whispers become more of a hushed discussion in the corner. Finally, in 2012, it became a deafening roar...Change was coming. Get ready. I, maybe out of naivete, but more probably, out of hubris said: Bring it on!

This change in the test is a double shift in the paradigm. First of all, as you all are probably aware, the test became simpler...you only have to pass four tests instead of five. Additionally the dreaded essay was going the way of the dodo bird. There would be an incorporation...short guided answers to pointed questions. Of course, nothing is as easy as it seems. New tougher standards have been set. Prior knowledge in the content areas is a requirement, we are finding out. Yes, they had been warning of us that, but really...

The second shift is in the way the test was given, or taken...via computer. Now for most of the world, this seems to be a natural progression. However, in the world of Correctional Education, this was nearly heart stopping. Shifting from the pencil-paper test to testing via computers was formidable on several fronts. Initially, the NDCS had to invest in computers for 9 facilities. This was no small feat. Going through the steps of procurement was secondary only to changing some perceptions about our clientele going on-line. It involved the creation of intranets at all facilities, an additional cost. On top of that, the tests were going to be more expensive, another added expanse to the tight budget belt.

Most of our population is not what one would call, computer savvy. I, myself, am a dinosaur when it comes to computers. I can do the basic functions, but it has taken me several years. I have had some training. Most of our people who will be taking the test in correctional settings, have not. We will have to change our focus in many ways to get the consumers ready for their test...both content and format. We also depend on volunteer examiners. The new format is somewhat daunting when first looked at through the eyes of those who are now being asked to do more training. Downloading, scheduling, and setting up testing through the new frameworks can be challenging. Fortunately our examiners are welcoming the challenge.

Multiple sources claim to be experts in this field. One of the most intimidating things is the ordering of materials. While there have been several publishers that have sent out notices proclaiming they have the best resources, how do we know for sure? I, for one, will be watching and tracking the progress of our individuals. We purchased materials from a couple of different sources. In fact, we spent a bunch of money to get things updated.

Additionally, we must look, at least in our department, at the move to programming on the computers. We have spent, sorry, invested considerable money to update our computer labs at all facilities. Buying software, however, is another huge cost. Will the new curriculums be up to snuff? Will they prepare our students to attain that vaunted 170 score? Every salesperson I talk to says their stuff has been matched to the new tests...hmmm...

Just last month, GEDTS decided to extend the time on the Math test. This comes after years of research, testing, and evaluation. I was glad to see they would make an adjustment; it shows a willingness by them to adapt. However, will the 170 mark required for Honors assessment also be changed? That is one that I think needs to be looked at. The overwhelming majority of administrators attending COABE in Pittsburgh felt the same way. In the NDCS Education world, we know that the majority of our students may not be looking to go to college. What if, in the federal government's eyes, our success rate of 94% isn't good enough to continue funding because we don't have enough who finish at the Honors Level?

We are all doomed.

I don't really believe we are. I feel confident in our educators' abilities to adapt and change. I also feel that we will get a better handle on this, soon. When we first started the process of transitioning to the GED® 2014 Series, I warned people in my department that we may not be testing until April, 2014. We have been experiencing obstacles along the way. We have had to backtrack, redo, and push back deadlines...but we have 3 graduates, so far, in the NDCS. Last year, we had 250 during the fiscal year. We have a long way to go. We are finally getting all our proctors to a point where they are only three steps away from being qualified...which we learned of this very morning.

As an administrator, it is part of my job to keep the hand-wringing to a minimum. We need to keep in mind that it took a couple of years to adapt to the changes that came with GED® 2002. With the double paradigm shift we have on this series, we should expect some transition time. The last thing I want to have happen in our department is for us to go out and experience a rash of failures. That isn't good for statistics, and more importantly, staff and student morale. It is necessary for us to give our students the foundations for success. The only problem is, no one knows exactly what that entails. We as educators and administrators must be patient. We must be methodical. We must be prepared for this to be a time of transition. We can, and will, be successful in this new era. We just all have to remain calm and continue to build bridges.

Mark Your Calendar!

Plan now to attend!

Adult Education Conference

Kearney, Nebraska

October 2-3, 2014

Literacy Center Raises over \$20,000 at 6th Annual Adult Spelling Bee

Submitted by Kirsten Case, Director, Literacy Center for the Midlands

A frolic through the dictionary gave the community a fun way to get involved in helping adults learn to read. The sixth annual Adult Spelling Bee, held November 15 at the Scott Conference Center, raised more than \$20,000 for the Literacy Center. Enthusiasm for words and spelling comes from the knowledge that **words make life better**, which is the motto of the Literacy Center. The Center helps hardworking people acquire the practical skills to make them more active and contributing members of our community. From reading a food label, to writing a check, to reading their mail, the Center does more than help people learn to read books. We help people lead better lives.

Twelve community and corporate teams of three adults each, tested their word-knowledge and spell-ability. While the competition was friendly, it was also fierce as the logophiles vied for trophies including:

Best of Hive – Omaha Public Library

Runner-up Best of Hive – Omaha World Herald

Best Costume – The Reading Divas

Best Team Spirit – Exoteric Book Club

The audience of over 150 included closet bibliophiles and philomaths, who took part in an audience spelling quiz. Expert speller Emma Johanningsmeier, a semifinalist in the 2010 Scripps National Spelling Bee, was on hand to offer expert advice to the contestants. Listening to every vowel and consonant was the panel of judges: Andrea Hoig, metroMagazine; John Heaston, The Reader; and Ellen Scott, The Bookworm. They were joined by our expert pronouncer Robert Dornsife from Creighton University and emcee Alex Hoffman, First News anchor KETV. Honorary chairs for the Spelling Bee were Chris and Sharlon Rodgers. For more information about the Literacy Center: www.giveliteracy.org, 402/342-7323.

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